

The Foundation for Environmental Conservation: Origins, Objectives, and Needs

AUSPICES AND GOVERNING BOARD

The Foundation (FEC), which had started operating unofficially some years earlier, was finally established legally in 1975 at Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland, as non-profit and tax-exempt by authority of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva and perpetually under Swiss Federal Government surveillance by the Department of the Interior, Berne. Its viewpoint and emphasis are holistically global and its activities as widely international as possible. Its headquarters and Secretariat are at 7 Chemin Taverney, 1218 Grand-Saconnex, Geneva, Switzerland (telephones [4122] 798 2383 & 798 2384; fax [4122] 798 2344).

The Founders of FEC were the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources* (IUCN), the World Wildlife Fund† (WWF), both based at Gland, Switzerland, and Professor Dr Nicholas Polunin, of the above address. The Governing Board of the Foundation consists of the last-named for life and a representative each of IUCN and WWF, with powers to co-opt a very limited number of other members for periods of three years at a time (renewable for similar periods).

OBJECTIVES (UPDATED)

- A. To undertake, in cooperation with appropriate individuals, organizations, and other groups, all possible activities to further the ends indicated in its title, and specifically:
- B. To own and promote pertinent publications, in particular the international Journal *Environmental Conservation*, and to derive therefrom revenues to be used especially towards coverage of publication costs — in mind are certain other journals, possible supplements to the present one, and, ultimately, much-needed works of reference. The Foundation-sponsored, open-ended series of Environmental Monographs & Symposia started publication in 1981, and a complementary series of shorter 'readers', entitled Cambridge Studies in Environmental Policy, will soon be coming into production: the latter at least will be paying a royalty to the Foundation.
- C. To foster pertinent conferences, in particular the International Conferences on Environmental Future (ICEFs), and to sponsor the Baer-Huxley Memorial Lectures;
- D. To organize specialist 'Workshops' etc. to deliberate and pronounce freely on urgent aspects of environmental despoliation or other causes for grave concern, e.g. the widespread dieback of trees and more general devegetation;
- E. To encourage, and where possible promote, studies on environmental change, including ecobiome and ecosystem development and maintenance;
- F. To institute through appropriate auspices, and thereafter continue to sponsor and promote, the World Campaign for The Biosphere, 1982–, whose functions are now fostered primarily by the World Council For The Biosphere (see 5 below) and the affiliated

International Society For Environmental Education; and

- G. to accept and administer (under Swiss Federal surveillance by the Department of the Interior, Berne, and the authority of the Council of State of the Republic and Canton of Geneva) tax-exempt funds for the above purposes, including the creation and bestowal of suitable awards for environmental achievement and allied enterprise.

ADOPTED OR FAVOURED PROJECTS

1. *Environmental Conservation and Its Index etc.*

The Foundation having reassumed financial responsibility for the printing and production of the Foundation's Journal, and help from the United Nations Environment Programme and other sources having covered incidental needs of the Journal through 1988, funds are required continually for its support in such ways as subventions for extra pages published beyond the standard 88 of text per issue, and to pay for illustrations, proof corrections, 'free' offprints, and other incidental expenses which hitherto were largely contributed with his services by the President in his capacity as Editor but which mounting costs and personal taxes are making it increasingly difficult for him to support unaided. In addition, funds are desirable (1) to cover more editorial and incidental expenses, and (2) to increase the value of a prize or prizes for the best paper or papers published each year in *Environmental Conservation* or otherwise through the Foundation.*

The cumulative 'Index of Titles and Authors in *Environmental Conservation*, 1974–86', comprising 159 pages in the format of the Journal, is now published and available from the Foundation's Secretariat (address below) at the price of US \$30 or Sw.Frs 45 (postage included). It is being followed by a Supplement covering the years 1987 and 1988 which is being sent free to all recorded purchasers of the original Index while stocks last, and thereafter by 5-yearly supplements.

2. *International Conferences on Environmental Future*

Whereas the President's family hopes to continue to refrain from reclaiming the amount still owing to him personally in respect particularly of the 2nd ICEF (actually from the proceeds of the *ad hoc* sale of his Arctic library to the Government of Canada) and the 3rd ICEF etc. (apart from his donation of the proceeds of the Sasakawa International Environment Prize, 1987) as indicated in the yearly accounts, substantial sums will be needed to carry out further ICEFs, though it is expected that the bulk of necessary financing will in general be contributed by or through suitable host countries. The first ICEF in 1971 cost approximately \$44,000 (apart from relieving gifts and the generosity of the host Government of Finland) and the 2nd ICEF c. \$65,000 (including preparation and publi-

* Now restyled 'The World Conservation Union' but retaining the familiar acronym of IUCN.

† Now renamed 'The World Wide Fund for Nature' but retaining the familiar acronym of WWF.

* These are the 'Best Paper' Prizes which, starting in 1987, have since been awarded annually to the Author or Authors of the best paper or papers published in the preceding year in the Foundation's quarterly Journal *Environmental Conservation* or other publication. To winners chosen by the Foundation's confidential Awards Committee, up to four such Prizes have been awarded annually.

cation of the Proceedings in adequate detail, but apart from the help of the host Government of Iceland and various Icelandic services). The much smaller 3rd cost c. £20,000 and the 4th about US \$80,000.

The 3rd ICEF took place in September 1987 in Edinburgh, Scotland. It was limited to 75 invited participants and lasted the equivalent of only two days, being organized as a lead-in to a 4th ICEF, which was much larger and longer and was held, in the spring of 1990, in Budapest (by invitation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences) on the theme of *Surviving With The Biosphere*. Its above-indicated cost of c. US \$80,000 was after deduction of generous inputs from the Academy and Government but reflected the need to pay or at least help substantially with the expenses of a large proportion of participants. Incidentals included small workshops, meetings of the International Steering Committee, and the Baer-Huxley Memorial Lecture (*see below*).

3. Other Journals and Series of Books

(a) Means are desired to encourage and help further needed journals through sponsorships, memberships, or serving on boards, an example being *Environmental Awareness*, the organ of the International (formerly Indian) Society of Naturalists (INSONA), of which the President and his Wife are Patrons. Other instances include *The Biosphere* and the *Bulletin of the Asian Society for Environmental Protection*, of which the President is a Life Member.

(b) Environmental Monographs & Symposia: Means are desired to support special cases with a leading international Publisher, and to help (c) the complementary Cambridge Studies in Environmental Policy series (likewise sponsored by the Foundation), consisting of highly authoritative 'readers' for environmental policymakers, politicians, and the enlightened public.

4. World Education Concerning The Biosphere

With the object of promoting world-wide knowledge of The Biosphere and appreciation of how humans are an integral part of it and utterly dependent on it, and yet are threatening it with their ever-increasing numbers and pressures on its finite resources, there were proposed in *Environmental Conservation* successively various activities and bodies leading up to the joint World Council For The Biosphere (WCB)–International Society for Environmental Education (ISEE). The former of these was founded primarily to foster the World Campaign for The Biosphere, while the latter became most closely associated with the North American Association for Environmental Education (NAEE), of which the President is a Life Member. As was advised by the Foundation's governmental supervisors, WCB has latterly been strengthened with the election of a full complement of 21 Councillors, the agreed adoption of a binding Constitution, and the appointment of Sir John Burnett as Executive Secretary.

5. The World Council For The Biosphere

The origins and auspices of this body, henceforth to function autonomously but as an important project of the Foundation, are explained in the last paragraph above, its main purpose being 'to safeguard the continuing integrity of The Biosphere by serving as a select international forum for the analysis and appraisal of existing and fore-

seeable relationships between human population and economic development on one hand and, on the other, the totality of living and life-supporting systems of our planet which collectively constitute The Biosphere.' For subsidization of the general running and meetings of WCB, reimbursement of costs especially of its Executive Secretary, travel by its 4 appointed officers and sanctioned maximum of 17 other Councillors or their nominees, and satisfaction of various concomitant needs, an endowment of one million US dollars or c. 50% more Swiss francs is needed urgently and being sought, as agreed by the Governing Board of the Foundation and approved in principle by both of the governmental supervisors.

6. Research and Writing Projects

(a) Various worthy research projects have been encouraged with due publication of their results, but a budgetary item to help future ones financially would be welcomed. Attractive possibilities keep coming to mind, and rarely does a month pass without at least one worthy proposal being conceived or received.

(b) Among writing and editing projects, in addition to the President's recent *Ecosystem Theory and Application* in the Environmental Monographs & Symposia series, may be cited the need of a new edition of his *Introduction to Plant Geography and Some Related Sciences* which, though published in 1960 and now badly outdated, is still being widely used and even translated (currently into Indonesian). The new edition should include additional sections on pollution effects and ecology, plant conservation, introductions and their effects, competition, continental drift, foreseeable effects of climatic change, and the role of plants in environmental conservation — for all of which, and widespread updating, specialist collaboration will be needed.

FURTHER DESIDERATA

(a) Feasibility study of a proposed top-level World Academy of Environmentalists (now that the educational etc. aspects are being furthered especially by the international bodies mentioned in No 4 above and by more and more national and regional ones).

(b) Compilation of a long-planned *World Who's Who in Environment & Conservation: Leading Specialists, Administrators, and Benefactors*, which should be related to both (a) and an organizational-institutional counterpart that has been compiled in California.

(c) Encouragement of a proposed 'World Circle for Survival Consensus' to support the World Council For The Biosphere in its efforts towards impressing on decision-makers and the world at large the imperative of action along appropriate lines (such as widespread adoption of a 'hydrogen economy') to relieve increasing pressures on The Biosphere.

(d) Endowment of the Baer-Huxley Memorial Lectures on topics of contemporary environmental concern, normally given in connection with the International Conferences on Environmental Future (*see 2 above*).

(e) Endowment of a prize or prizes for the best paper or papers published each year in *Environmental Conservation* or a book sponsored by the Foundation (*see also footnote to right-hand column on preceding page*).

(f) In view of the relatively modest value by current standards of the Sasakawa International Environment Prize, the resumed North American orientation of the Tyler Prize, and the subdivision of the Goldman environ-

mental award into one prize to a 'grassroots' environmentalist in each of the six inhabited continents, a major yearly or biennial *individual* award for environmental attainment and leadership is an important need — if possible on a par with, or ahead of, the Nobel Peace Prize (for which a leading environmentalist has recently been nominated on the basis of the urgency of Mankind being at peace with his environment). It has been affirmed that this is something which the Foundation could handle, through its confidential Awards Committee, given only the necessary funds and an *ad hoc* office. An endowment of US \$10 millions or Sw.Frs 14 millions would suffice for this and meanwhile satisfy other of the above needs from income.

(g) Means of convening working groups of leading specialists to pronounce quite freely on major environmental threats and advise WCB (see 4, 5, and (c) above) concomitantly. (There has been talk of an attractive lake-side estate near Geneva.)

(h) Sponsorship without financial commitment of appropriate conferences such as the projected *series* of International Conferences on Waste Minimization and Clean Technology, of which the first was held successfully in Geneva, Switzerland, early in 1989.

(i) Perfection by Dr Robert G. Bailey, USDA Forest Service, of his multicoloured Ecoregions Map of the Continents of which a first, encouraged attempt was distributed with his 'Explanatory Supplement' published in *Environmental Conservation* (Vol. 16, No. 4, pp. 307–9, 1989).

Further projects are under consideration, including urgent research proposals, a major World Heritage Series of volumes, a World Wilderness Alliance, establishment of a biennial award for demonstrated environmental concern and concomitant action by a multinational corporation, a foundation or other mechanism to help journalists and other media-mongers to stress environmental matters, and fostering the establishment of associated foundations etc. in other parts of the world.*

OPERATION AND NEEDS

With ever-mounting costs and taxes (though the Foundation itself is non-profit and tax-exempt), and problems *inter alia* of currency exchange, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain the Secretariat privately

— despite assistance from the Journal's Publisher and intermittent help from the United Nations, the Japan Shipbuilding Industry Foundation, and other sources. Consequently funds are needed to help defray essential office etc. expenses — including those of three telephones (one primarily a fax) and heavy postage, subscriptions, purchases of reference works and other equipment, extra pages of the Journal, useful reprinting and entertaining, and necessary travel when sanctioned by the Board. In addition, some financing is now desired for payment of further casual assistance, attendance at conferences and meetings, and reimbursement of services etc. paid for in maintaining and supplying the Secretariat.

With the running costs already largely accounted for, and in the absence of any institutional overheads and taxes other than those that continue to be paid privately, the Foundation constitutes what has been called a uniquely economical vehicle for support of the environmental /conservational movement — whether generally or through specific projects which can be put in train as soon as or soon after funds become available. Many needs have already been indicated: to accomplish them contributions are warmly welcomed and individually acknowledged, and can be received in any negotiable currency by cheque made out to the Foundation for Environmental Conservation, c/o Mr Heinz Christen, Pictet & Cie Banquiers, 29 Boulevard Georges-Favon, 1204 Geneva, Switzerland, or sent to the undersigned.

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* These include the International Vernadsky Foundation, established in 1988 and centred on the USSR, of which the President is one of the 10 Founders. It is now absorbed in the Vernadsky International Centre for Biosphere Studies, which has recently been established, *inter alia* at our urging, in the USSR Academy of Science's Institute of Soil Science and Photosynthesis at Pushchino near Moscow, USSR. They also include the (Indian) National Environmental Conservation Association, of which the President is a life Member and a Member of the Advisory Board, and the collaborating International Society of Naturalists (INSONA), of which the President is an elected Fellow and Patron.

Ecology and 'Ecotasis'

Ecology is a science — an objective discipline. Societies* and Journals, university Departments and professorial Chairs, are now specifically devoted to it practically world-wide. As an objective science, ecology is not directly involved with human ethics, morals, or behaviour. (Of course, ecologists may be ethical or moral, behaving well or otherwise; but those are matters of personal predilections.) Ecology is not to be equated with Nature and other conservation, although in the minds of many laymen today the terms seem to have become almost synonymous. This confusion may have practical advantages, in so far as people wishing to keep the air pure and the countryside green, are willing to spend effort and even money towards those ends. So, in a way, it pays ecologists to be seen as conservationists, even if they are in fact studying some esoteric ecological problem — such as the competition of two kinds of tapeworm in a common gut. However, playing on this terminological confusion is not strictly honest.

We therefore suggest that scientists, at least, consider using the word 'ecotasis' for conservation business, and retain the term 'ecology' — along with entomology,

palaeontology, and all the other sciences — as a field of objective study. Conservationists and adherents of Green parties etc. could then devote themselves to 'ecotastic' activities and be referred to as 'ecotasisists', using basic ecological methods and data when needed, so that the vital meanings involved would be thereby clarified and conserved for the benefit of all.

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* Such as the British Ecological Society, which was founded in the Spring of 1913. This pioneering society's *Journal of Ecology* is now in its 78th volume.